

port. Though he denied possession of any baggage, his ticket indicated that he had already checked in two pieces of baggage by the aircraft and excess baggage charges had also been paid by him. The aircraft had by then taken off from the airport. As the passenger had disowned the baggage, the Air India authorities, for security reasons, recalled the aircraft and off-loaded the two unclaimed suitcases. Examination of the two suitcases resulted in the recovery of 1880 pieces of snake skins valued approximately at Rs. 18 lakhs. The snake skins were seized under the provisions of the Customs Act. The passenger was arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

Further investigations are in progress. In the interest of effective investigations it will not be expedient to disclose further details of this case at this stage.

#### **Purchasing Power of Rupee vis-a-vis U.S. Dollar**

\*203. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the purchasing power of Indian rupee is persistently weakening ;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefore ;
- (c) whether Indian rupee is persistently weakening against the U.S. dollar ; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) The purchasing power of the rupee is measured by the reciprocal of the All-India consumer price Index for Industrial Workers (base 1960=100). As such there has been a decline in purchasing power reflecting the rise in the consumer Price Index.

In the past few years, the U.S. dollar has strengthened against almost all other

major international currencies and the rupee is no exception. The dollar's strength in the international exchange markets is attributed mainly to the large interest rate differential in favour of the U. S. dollar inviting large capital flows into U. S. A. In a regime characterized by floating exchange rates for major international currencies, movements in the exchange rates of rupee with other foreign currencies are unavoidable.

#### **Operation of International Flights from Trivandrum Airport**

\*204. PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

- (a) the details of international flights operating from Trivandrum airport ;
- (b) whether he has received representations for starting more flights and to cover other places also ; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN) : (a) A statement is attached.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Representations have been received from time to time for the introduction of services from Trivandrum to other foreign stations which include Doha, Muscat, Bahrain and London.

Air India is prepared to operate services from Trivandrum to Doha (Qatar), Muscat (Oman) and Bahrain. Schedules were filed by Air India with the aeronautical authorities of Qatar and Oman for clearance which was not given. They have indicated that clearance would be subject to their designated carrier being permitted to operate to Trivandrum. Under the existing inter-governmental arrangements they do not enjoy this right.

The traffic between Trivandrum and London is not adequate to sustain a commercially viable point to point operation.

Hence the heavy investment required for infra-structure development will prove counter-productive.

### Statement

#### *Number of International Flights operated to/from Trivandrum*

Name of Airlines	Flight No.	Route	Frequency	Type of aircraft	
1	2	3	4	5	
AIR INDIA (Westbound)	AI-921	Trivandrum-Dubai	Once weekly	Airbus	
	AI-923	Trivandrum-Dhahran	-do-	-do-	
	AI-925	Trivandrum-Abu Dhabi-Dubai	-do-	-do-	
	AI-927	Trivandrum-Sharjah-Abu Dhabi	-do-	-do-	
	AI-929	Trivandrum-Abu Dhabi-Ras-al-Khaymah	-do-	-do-	
	AI-931	Trivandrum-Dubai-Abu Dhabi	-do-	-do-	
	AI-935	Trivandrum-Abu Dhabi-Dubai	-do-	-do-	
	(Eastbound)	AI-920	Dubai-Abu Dhabi-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-922	Dhahran-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-924	Abu Dhabi-Dubai-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-926	Ras-al-Khaymah Sharjah-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-928	Abu-Dhabi-Sharjah-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-930	Abu Dhabi-Dubai-Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
		AI-932	Kuwait-Dubai Trivandrum	-do-	-do-
INDIAN AIRLINES	IC-563/564	Trivandrum-Male Trivandrum	Twice weekly	B-737	
	IC-507/508	Trivandrum-Colombo Trivandrum	-do-	-do-	
AIR LANKA	UL-161/162	Colombo-Trivandrum Colombo	Thrice weekly	B-737	